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Lo! to my ears comes up a solemn strain, and the Eagle shrieks and flies. The thunderbolt withers from my hand:—

"The Oracles are dumb;
No voice or hideous hum
Rum through the arch'd roof with words deceiving;
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving;
No nightly trance, or breathed spell,
Inspires the pale-eyed priest in his prophetic cell."

A louder thunder has been heard than Jove's. There is a mountain more venerable than Olympus. Moses went up there to talk with God, and came down with the brightness of the sun in his countenance that could not be looked upon, bearing in his hand an eternal law. That thunder still echoes which shook Babylon, and quelled the Assyrian. The Persian rolled away before it like a cloud. The Egyptian, Greek, and Roman, have fled from it for ever.

But a greater than Moses has made the mountains holy. A greater hierophant opened up there the law and the prophets. On a mountain Satan confessed his conqueror. Who shall conceive of that tremendous hour, pregnant with the fate of man, when "Jesus went up alone into the mountain to pray!" And we know what deed was done on Calvary.

APOLOGUES AND FABLES FROM FOREIGN LANGUAGES.

(Translated for the Irish Penny Journal.)

No. V.—THE OLD MAN AND THE YOUTHS.

(FROM THE FRENCH OF LAFONTAINE.)

A man of eighty years was planting trees:—

"Ha! ha!" laughed out three striplings from the village,

"Planting at eighty!—Had his task been tillage,

Or building houses, or aught else you please,

The folly might have passed as less worth noting,

But—planting trees! He must indeed be doting!

Why, in the name of all that's odd, old neighbour,

What fruit can such as you expect to gather

From this ridiculous and driftless labour?

You, who already are a great-grandfather!

What! do you think to rival in his years

Methuselah? For shame! Do penance rather

For your past errors! Mourn your sins with tears!

Abandon hopes and plans that so ill suit your

Age and grey hairs! Give over looking wildly

Out through the vista of a boundless future!

All these are but for us, and such as we."

"They are not even for you," replied the Old Man mildly.

"Youth may be just as nigh Eternity

As Age. What though the pitfalls of Existence

Be covered o'er with flowers in lieu of snows,

Who shall foremeasure the brief distance

Between this dim dream's birth and close?

The winged bolts of Death are swift to strike

Life in its dawning as decline;

The pallid Parcae play their game alike

With your days and with mine.

Who knows which of us four shall be the one

To gaze last on the glory of the sun?

Molest me not, then. Leave me to employ

The hours that yet remain to me. I love

To think my great-grandchildren will enjoy

The shade and shelter of this embryo grove.

Meantime I live, I breathe, and I may even

Share for some years to come the gifts of Heaven.

Alas! even I may see the morning-light

Shine more than once, young men! upon your graves!"

The Old Man spake a truth which Time revealed:—

Boating soon after, on a stormy night,

One of these youths was buried in the waves—

A second was cut off upon the battle-field—

The third fell ill, and in four fleeting weeks

His bier was dressed with Death's pale plumes;—

So died the Three—thus early fated!

And while the tears rolled down his cheeks,

The Old Man sculptured on their tombs

The story I have here narrated.

M.

Learning, it has been said, may be an instrument of fraud: so may bread, if discharged from the mouth of a cannon, be an instrument of death.—*Bentham.*

THE SNUFF SHOP.

Few, we dare say, ever entered a shop of the description named in the title of this paper with any other idea than that they were entering merely a repository of Lundy Foot, cigars, and small twist. Few, we suppose, ever looked on such a place in any other light, or ever considered its keeper in any other point of view than that simply of a tobacconist. Yet is there another light, and a dismal one it is, in which both the snuff shop and the snuff dealer himself may be looked upon; and it is in such a light that we ourselves always do look upon them. This is, viewing the one as a charnel-house of defunct authors; the other as a goul, battering on their mortal remains. We sometimes vary this horrifying, but, alas! too correct view of the snuff shop and the snuff dealer, by supposing the one a sort of literary shambles or slaughter-house, and the other a cold-blooded, merciless literary butcher.

Taking either of these views of the snuff shop, what a change takes place in its aspect, and in that of every thing and person pertaining to it! What a dismal and hideous den it then becomes, and what a truculent, savage-looking fiend becomes that smiling and simpering tobacconist! No bowels of compassion has he for the mangled and mutilated authors that are lying thick around him, cruelly Burked by his own merciless hands. No; there he sits in the midst of the dire carnage as calm and unconcerned as if he had nothing whatever to do with it—the callous monster!

Pursuing the idea just broached, let us enter this horrid den, and for a moment contemplate its interior in a spirit in accordance with that idea; for, not being authors, we have nothing to fear for ourselves, it being that class only that need stand in awe of the snuff shop—to all others it is a harmless place enough.

Lo! then, behold (giving us the advantage here of a little stretch of imagination), the walls bespattered with the blood and brains of murdered authors; and see that blood-stained bench which the demon of the place calls a counter; and in various other depositories around lie their dismembered limbs and mangled carcases. Oh, it is a shocking and heart-rending sight!

Some of these unfortunates have evidently died hard: they have the appearance of having struggled desperately for life. But, alas, in vain! An irresistible destiny thrust them into the fatal snuff shop, where they perished quickly and miserably by the hand of the ruthless savage within. Others, again, seem to have quietly resigned themselves to their fate, and, indeed, to have been more than half dead before they were brought in; while others, again, appear to have been wholly defunct, having died a natural death. These, then, have been conveyed thither merely to be cut up, and converted to the degrading uses of the tobacconist.

Although some of the unhappy authors whose mangled remains strew this den of horrors seem to have attained a kind of maturity before they were cruelly torn to pieces as we now see them, by far the greater number are a sort of murdered innocents, having been strangled in their birth, or shortly after. A good many there are, too, who seem to have been dead born, or to have perished while yet in embryo.

Piteous as it is to look on the heavy, sturdy corpses of the murdered prose writers that lie thickly up and down this chamber of death, yet infinitely more piteous is it to contemplate the delicate, fragile forms of the poets thus cruelly mangled and mutilated that lie no less thickly around us. Poor dear, unfledged things! What a fate has been thine!—what a destiny, to be consigned, ere ye had yet opportunity to open your little musical throats, to the tender mercies of that literary Burke—that ruthless monster whom the world, thinking of him only in connection with cigars and pigtail, calls a tobacconist. Where now, sweet little humming birds, be those soft and tender notes with which ye sought, alas, how vainly! to charm the huge, rude ear of an uncouth and barbarous world that would not listen to ye? Alas, they have ceased for ever! How little does that savage, the demon of the place, mind your sweet, small voices, that give forth a piteous wail, like the last notes of the dying swan, every time he lays his merciless hands on you. Little, indeed! Let but a customer come in for half an ounce of "Blackguard," and he will, without the smallest hesitation or compunction, seize one of you, dear unfortunates, and tear you limb from limb for his own and that customer's convenience: ay, for a paltry three halfpence, mayhap less—a pennyworth of "Scotch"—will he perpetrate this atrocious deed. That sanguinary bench, that hor-